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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE — Radio Service — OFFICE OF INFORMATION

2HOUSEKEEPERS' CHAT

Tuesday, August 9, 1932.

(FOR BROADCAST USE ONLY)

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Subject: "Laundering White Clothes." Information from the Bureau of Home Economics, U.S.D.A.

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Sing a song of wash-day,
Of white clothes on the line—

"But," says Arabella, "the clothes I wash don't always come out white. That's the big trouble I have when I do my own laundering."

You aren't the only one, Arabella. Many other housekeepers have difficulty keeping white clothes white. Sometimes towels become dingy and greyish after laundering. Or perhaps sheets come out with brownish streaks that show up when they're ironed. Other white pieces may become yellowish.

Would you like to hear what laundry specialists at the Bureau of Home Economics have to say about laundering white clothes so they'll stay white?

Well, first they recommend thorough washing. And, second, they recommend thorough rinsing in soft water.

You can't expect clothes to look snow white if the soil is still in the fabric when they come from the laundry tub. That dingy greyish look on sheets and towels is very often the result of many careless washings, soil left in on many wash days. That's why the specialists urge thorough washing.

Soap left in the fabric may cause the garment to turn yellow. Or it may form those brownish spots we mentioned. Still another cause of this brownish or yellowish color may be iron in the water.

The only way I know of to get all the soap out of fabric is thorough rinsing, rinsing in one tub of fresh water after another until the water is clear and shows not one trace of the cloudiness that comes from soap. Some women neglect this job of rinsing. They spend all their energy on washing. But when it's time to rinse the clothes they just give them a lick and a promise. The clothes get no more than a couple of rinsings at the most. That's why the clothes don't look white after laundering.

Every now and then some home laundress thinks the trouble lies in the bluing she uses.

"I've tried every brand of bluing on the market," a lady told me the other day, "and yet my sheets look greyish."

No use putting all the blame on the bluing. My guess is that those sheets weren't rinsed until the water was clear. Bluing can't disguise poor laundering. That's not its job. But if you use bluing carefully, it will counteract the tendency of white clothes to become yellow.

While we're on this subject of thorough washing and rinsing, we ought to consider the effects of hard water on clothes. As every woman knows, who has to deal with it, hard water makes both washing and rinsing most difficult. The lime or other mineral salts in the water interfere with the cleansing action of soap. In fact, you have to use an extra large amount of soap to make suds. And then the soap and the mineral salts together form a scum that looks like curds. You've often seen this scum if you've washed clothes in hard water. It sticks to the clothes and is most difficult to rinse out. And it often floats on top of the rinsing water.

How to prevent this difficulty? Well, water softeners are the greatest helps. Softening the rinsing water is even more important than softening the washing water. If you have to choose which you'll soften choose the rinsing water every time.

Ordinary washing soda is one of the most effective and commonly used materials for softening water. Borax is not quite so effective, but because it's milder, it's better for delicate fabrics like silk and woolens. Some authorities claim that borax in small amounts improves the whiteness and freshness of linen clothes.

Here's something else about water softeners. Be sure to see that they are thoroughly dissolved in the water before the soap or the clothes go in. The amount of softener you use depends entirely on the water. A very simple test shows when you've used enough. When you can make a good suds with the usual amount of soap, then the water is soft. And, by the way, softener chemicals work better in hot water than in cold water. So use hot water in washing whenever possible. At least add the softener to hot water. Then let the softened water cool down to a suitable temperature.

Many times the iron in the water discolors clothes. Spots from iron may vary in color all the way from yellow or brown to pink or red in different fabrics. Even soft, pure water may acquire iron from rusty pipes or from storage tanks.

I don't need to remind most practical housekeepers that the best whitener for clothes is old Mr. Sunshine. He may turn human beings brown, but he makes your sheets, towels, shirts, and so on white. Unfortunately, housekeepers who live in city apartments often have no opportunity to sun their clothes. But, whenever possible, let this fine natural bleach- the sun - have a chance at your laundry.

Every now and then someone asks how to get the very soiled spots off garments laundered in a washing machine. Men's shirts have a habit of being especially soiled at the collar and cuffs. They sometimes come out of the washing machine clean everywhere else but still soiled at the neckbands. This is a real difficulty, especially when the soil carries perspiration stains, as it is so

likely to do in hot weather. Before putting such garments in the washer, better spread the very soiled places on a flat surface and rub them with a bristle brush dipped in a concentrated soap solution. Or, simply moisten the garment and rub soap directly on these soiled spots. Then roll the garment up and let it stand for a few hours.

Here's another laundering question. What causes creases in table linen that are difficult and sometimes impossible to iron out, even after sprinkling?

Perhaps your wringer is adjusted too tight. A wringer that is too tight creases table cloths and napkins almost as firmly as an iron. Putting clothes through the wringer is a simple enough matter. But you have to be careful, even in simple matters. Straighten out each article before putting it through. Fold all buttons in, so they won't tear off or break or mar the wringer roll. And be sure to free each article from the rest of the clothes before it goes in. Put it through in straight folds to aid in ironing.

And one thing more. Be sure the article is spread out evenly as it goes between the rolls. A lump of folds at one end and a single thickness at the other is hard on the wringer, the garment and you.

All your work in washing, rinsing, wringing and so on may be in vain, if you don't remember to wipe off the clothes line before you hang out the clothes, if your ironing board cover is soiled, or if your iron is rusty or soiled on the bottom. Just little things like these can cause spots on snow white clothes. Keep your electric iron in a box away from moisture and dust. And be sure that it's clean on the bottom before you connect it with the current.

And one thing more, before we leave the laundry. Elbow grease has gone out of style these days, in all types of household jobs, washing included. We no longer beat our rugs violently or scrub our clothes vigorously. It's economy to clean all fabrics often and treat them gently. If you rub your clothes at all on the washboard, do it gently. You can remove much dirt from white clothes by soaking them in soapy water over night. Forcing soapy water through fabrics forces the dirt out of the fabrics. Many clothes need only to be squeezed in suds to be clean. Of course, <u>you</u> know that if clothes are washed before they become very dirty, less rubbing is necessary and they will last longer.

And don't forget, plenty of rinsing in soft water adds to the life and the looks of the fabric.

Tomorrow: "A Sandwich Luncheon."